

## § 25.203

(5) Identify the baselines, methods, and benchmarks for measuring the success of carrying out the strategic plan, including the extent to which poor persons and families will be empowered to become economically self-sufficient;

(6) Must not include any action to assist any establishment in relocating from one area outside the nominated area to the nominated area, except that assistance for the expansion of an existing business entity through the establishment of a new branch, affiliate, or subsidiary is permitted if:

(i) The establishment of the new branch, affiliate, or subsidiary will not result in a decrease in employment in the area of original location or in any other area where the existing business entity conducts business operations; and

(ii) There is no reason to believe that the new branch, affiliate, or subsidiary is being established with the intention of closing down the operations of the existing business entity in the area of its original location or in any other area where the existing business entity conducts business operation; and

(7) Include such other information as required by USDA in the Notice Inviting Applications.

(c) *Implementation of strategic plan.* The strategic plan may be implemented by State governments, tribal governments, local governments, regional planning agencies, non-profit organizations, community-based organizations, or other nongovernmental entities. Activities included in the strategic plan may be funded from any source, Federal, State, local, or private, which agrees to provide assistance to the nominated area.

(d) *Public access to materials and proceedings.* The applicant or the lead managing entity, as applicable, must make available to the public copies of the strategic plan and supporting documentation and must conduct its meetings in accordance with the applicable open meetings acts.

## § 25.203 Submission of applications.

*General.* A separate application for designation as an Empowerment Zone or Enterprise Community must be submitted for each rural area for which such designation is requested. The ap-

## 7 CFR Subtitle A (1-1-01 Edition)

plication shall be submitted in a form to be prescribed by USDA in the Notice Inviting Applications as published in the FEDERAL REGISTER, and must contain complete and accurate information.

## § 25.204 Evaluation of the strategic plan.

The strategic plan will be evaluated for effectiveness as part of the designation process for nominated rural areas described in subpart D of this part. On the basis of this evaluation, USDA may request additional information pertaining to the plan and the proposed area and may, as part of that request, suggest modifications to the plan, proposed area, or term that would enhance its effectiveness. The effectiveness of the strategic plan will be determined in accordance with the four key principles contained in § 25.202(a). USDA will review each plan submitted in terms of the four equally weighted principal objectives, and of such other elements of these principal objectives as are appropriate to address the opportunities and problems of each nominated area, which may include:

(a) *Strategic vision for change—(1) Goals and coordinated strategy.* The extent to which the strategic plan reflects a projection for the community's revitalization which links economic, human, physical, community development and other activities in a mutually reinforcing, synergistic way to achieve ultimate goals;

(2) *Creativity and innovation.* The extent to which the activities proposed in the plan are creative, innovative and promising and will promote the civic spirit necessary to revitalize the nominated area;

(3) *Building on assets.* The extent to which the vision for revitalization realistically addresses the needs of the nominated area in a way that takes advantage of its assets; and

(4) *Benchmarks and learning.* The extent to which the plan includes performance benchmarks for measuring progress in its implementation, including an on-going process for adjustments, corrections and building on what works.

(b) *Community-based partnerships—(1) Community partners.* The extent to